



Native American educational conference Nov. 13-14

November 2, 2015



The “Strengthening Our Communities” educational conference for Native American students grades 6 through 12 and their parents, teachers and community leaders will be held at Albuquerque’s Menaul School and begin with opening blessings, native dances and an introductory message by Cabinet Secretary Kelly Zunie of the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department. The rest of the day will revolve around a wide selection of workshops, ranging from native experiential education to entrepreneurship and exploring science and culture.

The event is a collaboration between the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department; Sundance Educational Consulting, a private, woman-owned business out of Placitas that specializes in serving schools with significant Native American populations; Los Alamos National Laboratory; Los Alamos National Security, LLC; Sandia National Laboratories; and Albuquerque’s Explora museum.

“Sundance Educational Consulting has organized 18 Native American conferences over the years,” company president Christine Becker said, “but Strengthening Our Communities is the first one in direct partnership with the State of New Mexico and our other partners. Our last event, in February of this year, drew more than 200 participants from over 40 schools, tribes and other entities nationally.”

Becker also is excited that well-known Native American comedian and actor Tatanka Means will be performing during Strengthening Our Communities’ evening meal on November 13.

Partnerships make a difference

Becker, who has over 40 years of experience as a teacher, administrator and consultant working in schools, believes that parent involvement is a major factor in student success in school and in life.

“My company has focused its energies on providing high-quality training for parents in Common Core standard requirements and in student activities that can be replicated at home,” Becker explained. “In addition, we offer materials and resources to parents and communities to continue growing their efforts.”

Cabinet Secretary Kelly Zunie strongly believes in partnerships as well.

“The New Mexico Indian Affairs Department is the first and only cabinet-level state Indian affairs department in the nation,” Zunie said. “We are proud of what already has been achieved by bringing tribal and state agencies together as respectful, forward-thinking sovereign governments, and we are dedicated to continue building on these foundations.”

For conference details, including registration information, check the [Sundance Educational Consulting](#) website. For general information on the State of New Mexico's efforts to improve the quality of life for the state's Indian citizens, visit the [New Mexico Indian Affairs Department](#) page.

Community Connections features news and opportunities that grow out of the Laboratory’s Good Neighbor Pledge: “To partner with our neighbors on strengthening math and science learning, diversifying the economy and expanding community giving in northern New Mexico.”

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